

CLIMATE CRISIS COALITION OF THE TWIN CITIES

Stop Global Warming with Natural Energy & Grassroots Power!

115 Second Avenue South, #714, Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-879-8937

August 21, 2014

Gina McCarthy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Susan Hedman
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Administrator McCarthy and Dr. Hedman:

The Climate Crisis Coalition of the Twin Cities (3CTC) is a grassroots group organized to educate, agitate, organize, and mobilize, around the extreme hazards of climate change and its green, sustainable, and renewable solutions. We take a holistic approach to all things concerning the health of Mother Earth since everything is interconnected and no natural phenomenon exists in isolation from others. We recognize that our planet is a self-organizing, self-regulating natural system and defend its living matrixes—the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, cryosphere, and lithosphere—from the onslaughts of commercial exploitation, which over the last 250 years has driven our planetary home into a state of severe crisis, pushing it to the brink of ecological collapse. As deep ecologists, we see that all things in Nature, both animate & inanimate, hold intrinsic and equal value because of the myriad interdependencies and the continual fluxes and flows of fluids, nutrients, gases, and matter. We view humankind as only one part of the biosphere that, like every other living thing, comes from Nature, lives in Nature, and ultimately returns to Nature. Our species, therefore, does not have the right to willfully destroy in selfish pursuit of its own needs, and must learn to abide by Nature's laws through moderation in all things and by returning in equal part that which it has taken just as does every other species with whom humanity humbly shares this world.

Consequently, our concerns go well beyond the impacts of global warming, and we stand against all forms of economic development, which threaten the health of the planet and its ecosystems. When it comes to the livelihood of working men and women, we support the provision of green jobs in clean industries, while making a just economic transition out of dirty ones. This includes free training and collective bargaining rights that guarantee union-scale wages and benefits.

We also support Indigenous treaty rights, Native American sovereignty, and an end to environmental racism, and we call for restorative justice for all First Nation Peoples to right some of the grievous wrongs that have been committed since European contact and the expansion of white colonial settlement across North America that has occurred since 1492.

For these reasons, we are writing in support of the Six Bands of the Anishinaabeg Territory Watersheds and Water of Lake Superior, who are requesting that the Environmental Protection Agency initiate a public process under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect treaty rights.


aquatic resources, fisheries, wildlife, subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering, and public uses in the Bad River Watershed and western Lake Superior Basin from metallic mining, including a potentially devastating Gogebic Taconite open-pit mine.

Being based in Minnesota, 3CTC understands that iron mining is not the benign form of metal extraction its proponents claim it is, and we are all too familiar with the pitfalls of open-pit iron and taconite mining and the damage it has caused in our state's Arrowhead Region. Taconite mining is second only to coal-fired power plants in generating toxic mercury pollution. It is also a source of sulfate contamination, which has destroyed many of the area's Manoomin or wild rice grounds. Our Department of Natural Resources knew as a result of research done in the 1940s that wild rice was seldom found in waters with high sulfate. In fact, recent fieldwork this century has shown that wild rice is not abundant in water with more than 10 parts per million sulfate. Damage to wild rice occurs when sulfate is converted to hydrogen sulfide. In an anoxic environment such as the sediment under wild-rice beds, bacteria inhale sulfate and exhale hydrogen sulfide, which is clearly toxic to aquatic plants at their roots. A prime example of the devastation caused by taconite mining is its impact on Sandy and Little Sandy Lakes, located near the Minntac Tailings Basin. A generation ago, Ojibwe bands from Grand Portage held rice camps there every season. Now, there is not a grain of rice left to be harvested because of sulfate run-off from the taconite tailings. As the toxic run-off continues to be generated, fewer and fewer wild rice beds remain productive in the ceded territories.

3CTC also opposes proposals for underground and open-pit hard-rock, non-ferrous mining operations in the Arrowhead Region to extract copper, nickel, gold, and platinum not only because it is highly energy-intensive but also because of the acid-mine drainage that would be generated virtually in perpetuity, rendering freshwater in streams, wetlands, and Lake Superior unfit for aquatic life or human consumption for many generations to come. In addition, we abhor the inevitable destruction of forests, bogs, wetlands, and river basins that would occur along with wildlife habitat despite attempts at so-called restoration. How does one truly restore a unique ecosystem that took Nature 12,000 years to create following the last Ice Age? Northern Minnesota, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and Northern Wisconsin all face a similar fate if transnational mining companies are allowed to write their own mining laws and extract ores then take the money and run, leaving the citizens of these states with a poisonous legacy of heavy metals, mercury, asbestos, acid-mine drainage, and ecosystems & watersheds degraded beyond recognition.

This potentially tragic situation cannot be allowed to occur in the Bad River Watershed of the Penokee Hills of Northern Wisconsin. For that reason, 3CTC strongly urges the EPA to honor the request of the Six Bands of the Anishinaabeg Territory and use its authority to enforce the 404(c) provisions of the Clean Water Act to prevent the human-made ecological disasters that have occurred at numerous other mining sites around the globe. We also wish to remind you that it would be consistent with the position you have already taken in regard to the Pebble Gold Mine at Bristol Bay, Alaska, where the watershed and salmon runs would be destroyed if that project goes through.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Frank".

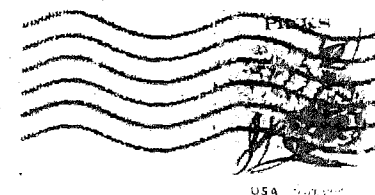
Christine Frank, Coordinator, Climate Crisis Coalition of the Twin Cities



Climate Crisis Coalition
c/o Christine Frank
115 2nd Ave. S., #714
Minneapolis, MN 55401

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

22 AUG 2014 PM 4 L



SEP 02 2014

Eina McCarthy, Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

20460

